

## Testimony Supporting

### SB 942, AAC Rental Application Fees

#### Member Organizations

**The Center for Family Justice**  
Bridgeport, CT

**The Center for Empowerment & Education**  
Danbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program United Services**  
Dayville, CT

**Network Against Domestic Abuse**  
Enfield, CT

**Domestic Abuse Services Greenwich YWCA**  
Greenwich, CT

**Interval House**  
Hartford, CT

**Chrysalis Domestic Violence Services**  
Meriden, CT

**New Horizons**  
Middletown, CT

**Prudence Crandall Center**  
New Britain, CT

**The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services**  
New Haven, CT

**Safe Futures**  
New London, CT

**Domestic Violence Crisis Center**  
Norwalk, CT

**Project SAGE**  
Sharon, CT

**The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services**  
Shelton, CT

**Domestic Violence Crisis Center**  
Stamford, CT

**Susan B. Anthony Project**  
Torrington, CT

**Safe Haven**  
Waterbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program United Services**  
Willimantic, CT

### SB 943, AAC the Return of Security Deposits Upon the Termination of Tenancy

#### Housing Committee February 7, 2023

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Luxenberg, Senator Sampson, Representative Scott, and members of the committee. CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those who serve them. Our 18 member organizations provide essential services to nearly 40,000 victims of domestic violence each year. Services provided include 24-hour crisis response, emergency shelter, safety planning, counseling, support groups, court advocacy, and housing advocacy.

#### **CCADV urges the Committee to support both SB 942 and SB 943, which are intended to ease some of the financial burden associated with renting.**

Domestic violence remains the leading cause of homelessness among women and children. Access to safe, stable, affordable housing is a key piece of a domestic violence survivor's ability to stay safe and prevent them and their children from having to experience further violence. Victims are often limited in the locations and types of housing they can access because of their unique safety and confidentiality needs, and the fact that 99% of them are subjected to financial abuse and don't have easy access to their family money or assets when attempting to leave and establish a new living arrangement.

With rent increasing in CT by at least 12% in recent years, the highly competitive housing market makes it increasingly difficult for victims to secure affordable housing, especially housing in their current neighborhood where they feel at home, where their children currently attend school, and where they are close to their support system. When a victim cannot find safe, affordable housing, they are more likely to remain or return to living with their abuser.

Senate Bill 942 would prevent landlords from profiting off of application screening by prohibiting them from both charging a fee for an application review that does not go through a third-party screening process and from charging a fee that is more than the actual cost paid by the landlord for a screening report when one is conducted. This is a reasonable policy that will prevent tenants from paying hundreds of dollars in applications fees, especially for apartments for which they aren't even being seriously considered. For many survivors, these savings may mean the difference in being able to afford the security deposit.

Senate Bill 943 would reduce the timeframe in which most security deposits would be returned to a tenant – down to 10 days from the existing 30 days. Several other states have shorter return periods than Connecticut, including surrounding states Rhode Island (20 days), New York (14 days), and Vermont (14 days). While we understand and agree that landlords need time to assess damage, we believe that in many, if not most cases, this assessment is done within days of a tenant vacating a unit. We therefore believe that it is reasonable in many circumstances for a landlord to return the portion of the security deposit, if any, due back to the tenant in less than 30 days. Again, for many survivors, this reduced timeframe will have an overwhelmingly positive impact on their ability to meet the upfront cost of their new living arrangement, facilitating their ability to be safe and stable.

Again, we urge the Committee's support of both bills and thank you for your consideration of how these policies impact survivors of domestic violence.

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